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modern interpreters, forsooth, of that literature, are at fatuous, but futile pains to eliminate thence. They tell us that expressions such as those just recalled from Hebrew Scripture, were idiosyncratic ways which that peculiar nation had, of representing in language the processes of nature !

Nay, verily. But it was of tuition, and not of intuition, that those forms of speech were born. The inveterate bent of the Jews to relapse and become polytheists and idolaters again, that bent so frequently and so tragically illustrated in their history, this is proof sufficient that the idea of God, as one and personal, was not an idea peculiarly natural to the Jewish stock. The Jews had the same natural tendency in religion as did the neighboring nations around them. That tendency was all to idolatry. The Jews were disciplined to be monotheists, and disciplined to believe in their God as a personal being. And a large part of the discipline by which they were trained to these convictions, consisted in the vast and elaborate scheme of requirements that brought them incessantly into contact, through obedience rendered, with a living, invisible, authoritative, absolute, Personal Will.

"THE HEBREW CLUB," LOWELL, MASS.

BY REV. J. W. HALEY.

Some three or four years since, one of the clergymen of Lowell, wishing to revive his knowledge of the Hebrew language, and recognizing the value of associated action, proposed to some of his clerical brethren the idea of the formation of a club for the study of this ancient and venerable language. Soon such a club was formed, and proceeded to the proposed work. At first, the club studied carefully the current Sunday-school lessons in the Old Testament for that year. They prepared and published in one of the city papers, "Vox Populi," weekly expositions of these lessons.

When, in the regular order, the field of Sunday-school study was changed from the Old Testament to the New, the Hebrew Club resolved to proceed to the critical study of the much-neglected book of Esther. Accordingly they made a new translation of that book directly from the original, with great care and labor, bringing to bear upon it, so far as was practicable, all the aids and appliances of exegetical scholarship. They sought to procure for examination whatever had been written in

relation to the book, whether monographs or commentaries; thus availing themselves of all the light which had been thrown upon it from any source, or in any age. Their new version was, from time to time, subjected to repeated revision by the members of the club, individually and collectively. They also sent printed copies of their production to eminent Hebrew scholars in this and other countries, requesting their criticisms and suggestions, which in turn received careful and respectful consideration by the club.

The translation thus slowly and thoroughly elaborated is to be published soon, accompanied with critical and exegetical notes, vocabularies, topographical diagrams etc., etc.

It is believed that few commentaries have been issued which have cost so much solid and conscientious labor, in proportion to the amount of scripture text considered. It is safe to say that the volume will prove a valuable addition to the surprisingly meager—and, for the most part, unsatisfactory—literature pertaining to the Book of Esther. The work above described will appear early in the ensuing spring, as is expected.

The Hebrew Club has also prepared some thirty discourses upon characters prominent in the book, or topics suggested by it. These discourses will probably make their appearance in a second and companion volume.

The Club also contemplate similar careful and thorough treatment of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, These two books, together with that mentioned above, comprise a sort of *terra incognita*, a little-known and seldom-explored portion of God's word; yet an important portion covering, as it does, a very interesting period of Jewish history.

The Club at present comprises the following members: Rev. Owen Street, D. D., Rev. J. M. Green, D. D., and Rev. W. P. Alcott of Roxford. Quite recently, until their removal from the vicinity, Rev. Prof. G. F. Wright of Oberlin, Ohio, and Rev. Selah Merrill, D. D., American Consul at Jerusalem, were connected with the Club.

Several other gentlemen have, for a longer or shorter period, participated in the work, until the pressure of other duties constrained them to surrender their membership.

Such is a concise account of the origin, object, labors and *personnel* of the Hebrew Club which has its head-quarters at Lowell, Mass.

It is to be hoped that ministerial brethren in other places may be encouraged to go and do likewise, or better.